

Famous Artists Course for Talented Young People
Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Section 2 The artist's materials—
watercolor and oils

Guiding Faculty

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[1904-1965]

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Watercolor

The painting mediums

If you've worked with watercolor and oils, you already know the joy of creating and exploring with colors. Colors have a language of their own through which artists tell their feelings. In the hands of a great painter, color can convey emotions as clearly as words.

It's great fun to work with watercolor and oils, even if you're only beginning. Just trying to match the paints on your palette to the colors you see all around you is a never-ending source of pleasure.

There's so much to learn about watercolor and oil that a lifetime of painting wouldn't be long enough. You're going to spend a lot of time with them in later lessons, but you'll start now by just experimenting and exploring with them, as you did with pencil and ink. Your initial step will be to learn how to hold your brush. That may sound elementary, but you've no idea how important it is. You'll see that each brush size creates its own kind of strokes and that it's helpful to get acquainted with as many as you can. You'll learn that paint has certain physical characteristics that you can use to advantage. Did you know, for example, that you can sharpen the illusion of depth in an oil painting if you thicken the pigment in the foreground? That you can vary the degrees of wetness in watercolor to help convey different moods? Very wet pigment can enhance the dreamy quality of a misty landscape; drier color on a dry brush is better for painting something crisp and sparkly, like a spring morning.





Oils




As you explore with your watercolors and oils, give yourself some problems to work on. Say, to use a simple example, you decide to paint water. Try it with both mediums. How would you paint a choppy sea? A calm one? How would you suggest ripples in water? Moonlight shimmering over the ripples? Try lots of different strokes, different thicknesses of paint, different brushes, different colors. There's no one way, no two ways, or three, of painting water — or any other subject in the world. We'll show you some techniques; you'll seek your own, too.

After you've practiced enough to know something about the nature of watercolor and oils, it would be helpful if you could examine some original paintings. Is it possible for you to visit a gallery or art museum? If not, there are probably art books containing excellent color reproductions in your school or town library. Look at them closely. Studying the painting techniques of fine artists can open your eyes and teach you a great deal about these mediums when you've worked with them long enough to know what to look for.

After you've learned to handle watercolor and oils with some measure of skill, you'll have at your bidding the four basic mediums that have been serving artists for centuries — these two, and pencil and ink. Of course, there are many other mediums, and we're going to learn about some of them, but these are the four you'll turn to most often whenever you want to paint or draw.

Now, with your paints and brushes ready, turn the page.



Watercolor

Watercolor is a wonderful medium to play with, to explore. You'll like it because it's fresh and clean, because you can work it quickly if you want to. Exciting things nearly always happen when you paint with this medium.

So plunge in and let your imagination go. Get lots of inexpensive paper. Use anything. Try the backs of wallpaper samples, for example. Try old newspapers, paper towels. Rough-textured watercolor paper will give you one look; smooth paper produces quite a different effect. There is no white pigment in watercolors: to lighten a color you just add more water; if you want pure white, just leave the paper clean.

You'll need something for a palette — a white plate or a small tray works very nicely. Squeeze out a few colors on it, have a stack of paper and a large bowl of water handy, and experiment to your heart's content with the brushstrokes and techniques we show you on these pages. But don't stop there. Make up your own. See what happens when you put color on a wet surface, when you paint with a very wet brush loaded with pigment, and when you paint with a brush that's almost dry.

If you have only half an hour to spend, watercolor is a fine companion. When the time is up, just walk away. Never mind if you haven't finished. Let the color dry on your palette. All you have to do is add a few drops of water to it when you're ready to paint again.

But beware of working over a watercolor painting too much. One of the charms of this medium is its simplicity, its directness. Sometimes it's far better to start over than it is to fiddle with a painting so much that it loses its spirit.

When you can, take your paints outdoors. You won't have to travel far to find a subject for a pleasing watercolor. Just be sure you choose something simple — one object like a tree or a barn will offer enough challenge.

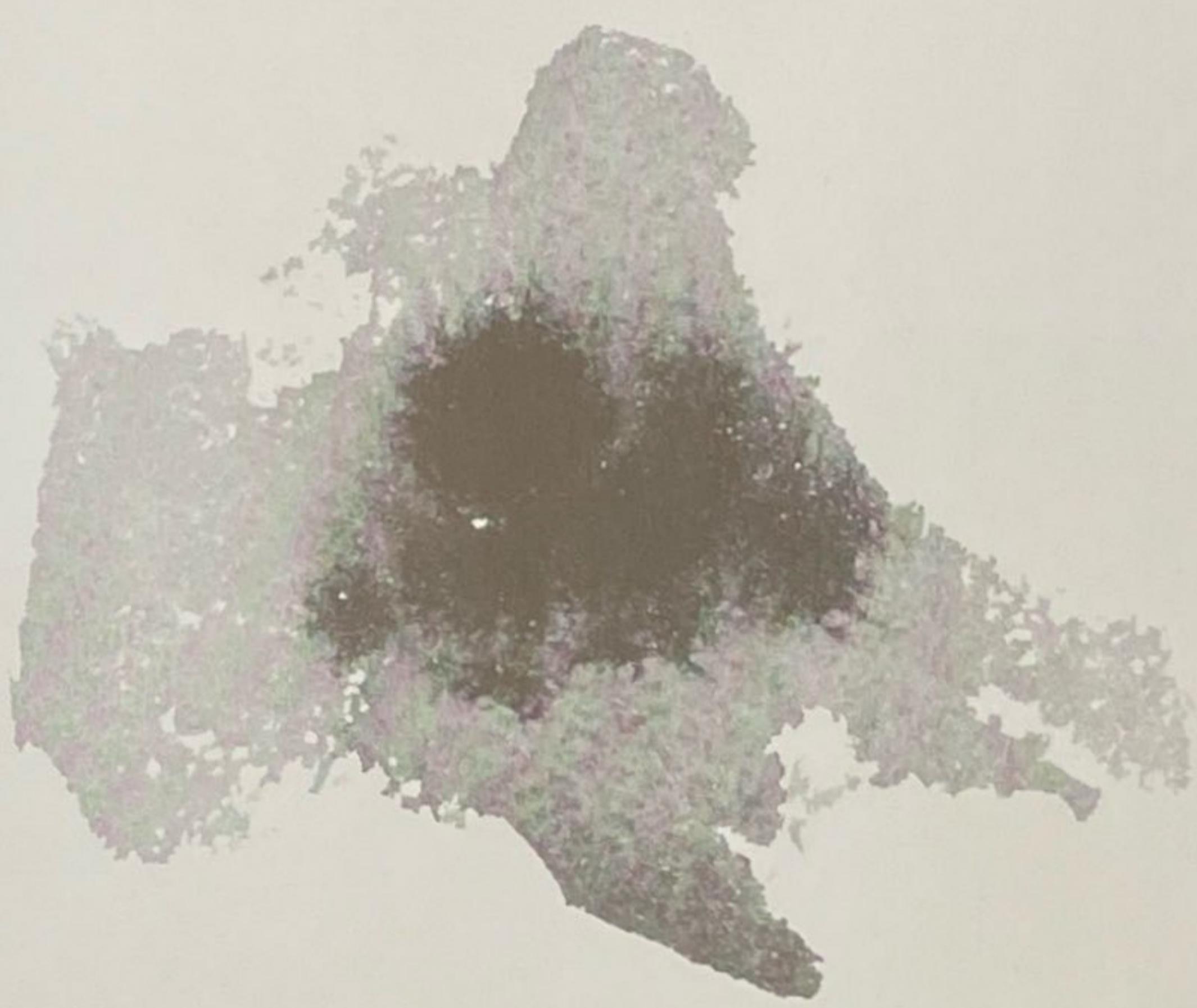
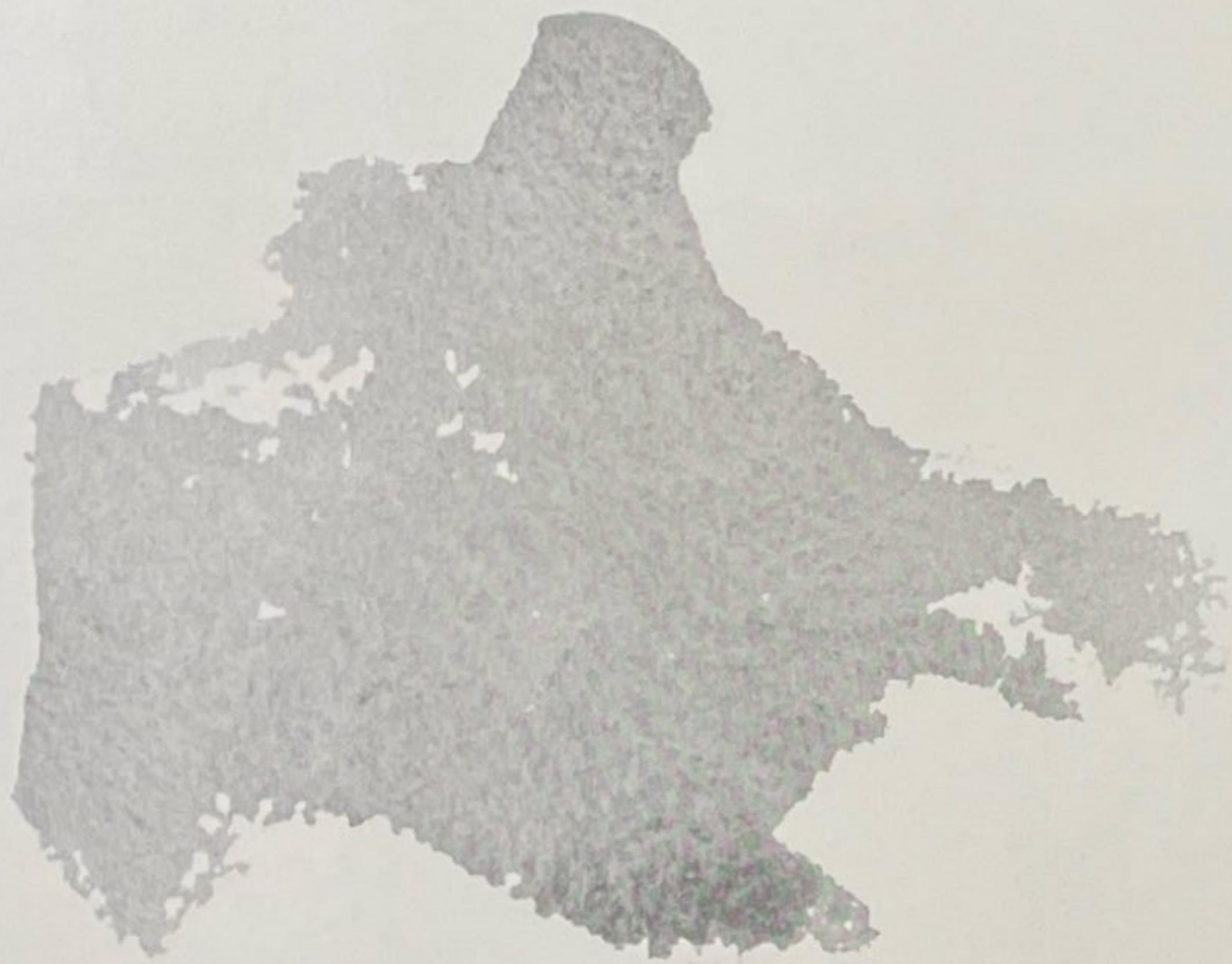
Notice how the wet-in-wet technique created this rainy sky. We seem to see the man through a veil of mist because the artist painted him while the paper was moist, blurring and dimming his outlines. Brushstrokes on dry paper gave the picture a change in texture and created the choppy sea.

Wet-in-wet

Watercolor is often painted on the paper in transparent, watery layers called *washes*. You can get interesting effects by dropping a dark wash of one tone into a still-wet lighter wash of another. Try this wet-in-wet technique when you want to paint fog or rain, or when you want clouds in your sky. You can paint trees this way, too, and flowers. Just about anything with soft edges can be rendered, often quite imaginatively, with the wet-in-wet process. Experiment with it, and watch what happens. The results will be different every time.



Grasp your brush as you would a pencil, so that your hand feels comfortable and relaxed. Give your thumb and fingers freedom to turn, twist and pull the brush in any direction. Be sure to rinse your brush each time you finish painting.



Here's how to get wet-in-wet

Use any color you choose. First paint pure water over the area of the paper you want to cover. Then apply a light wash of color while the paper is still damp. (The more water you use, the lighter the tone will be.) Drop a darker tone into the first one quickly—before it dries. This second tone will

"bleed" into the first; the extent of bleeding will depend on the wetness of your paper and the amount of water in your second wash. The thinner the second wash, the more it will bleed. With practice you'll be able to get just the effect you're after.



Graded wash

A graded wash is a thin spread of color, painted very wet, that proceeds from a dark tone to a light one, or, if you wish, from light to dark. To paint the one above, wet the area of your paper you wish to cover. Then, starting at the top with your darkest tone, paint in horizontal strokes, adding water to the pigment as you go down the page.



Dark over light

To change color or darken a value, you can lay one watercolor wash over another, provided the undertone is completely dry. Normally it's best to work dark tones over lighter ones. Here you see why—the tone of the vertical stroke comfortably covers the first two it crosses, but, being lighter than the bottom one, it doesn't affect it at all—in fact seems to go behind it.



Paint a watercolor

Now we'd like you to paint a picture to try out what you've discovered about watercolor. You should have fun with this street scene—it's gay and bright, it allows you to apply some of those strokes you've already practiced, and it's fairly simple to do. You'll notice that the sky was painted with very wet paint on wet paper, which let the colors run into each other. This wet-in-wet method gives a nice cloud effect. The brown paint of the roof on the right was quite wet too—see how it was allowed to run a little into the red of the house, creating the illusion of shadow.

On the opposite page are the three main steps we want you to take in painting your picture. While painting in watercolor may be new to you, the procedure really isn't—it's just about the same as the one you followed in making your pencil sketch.

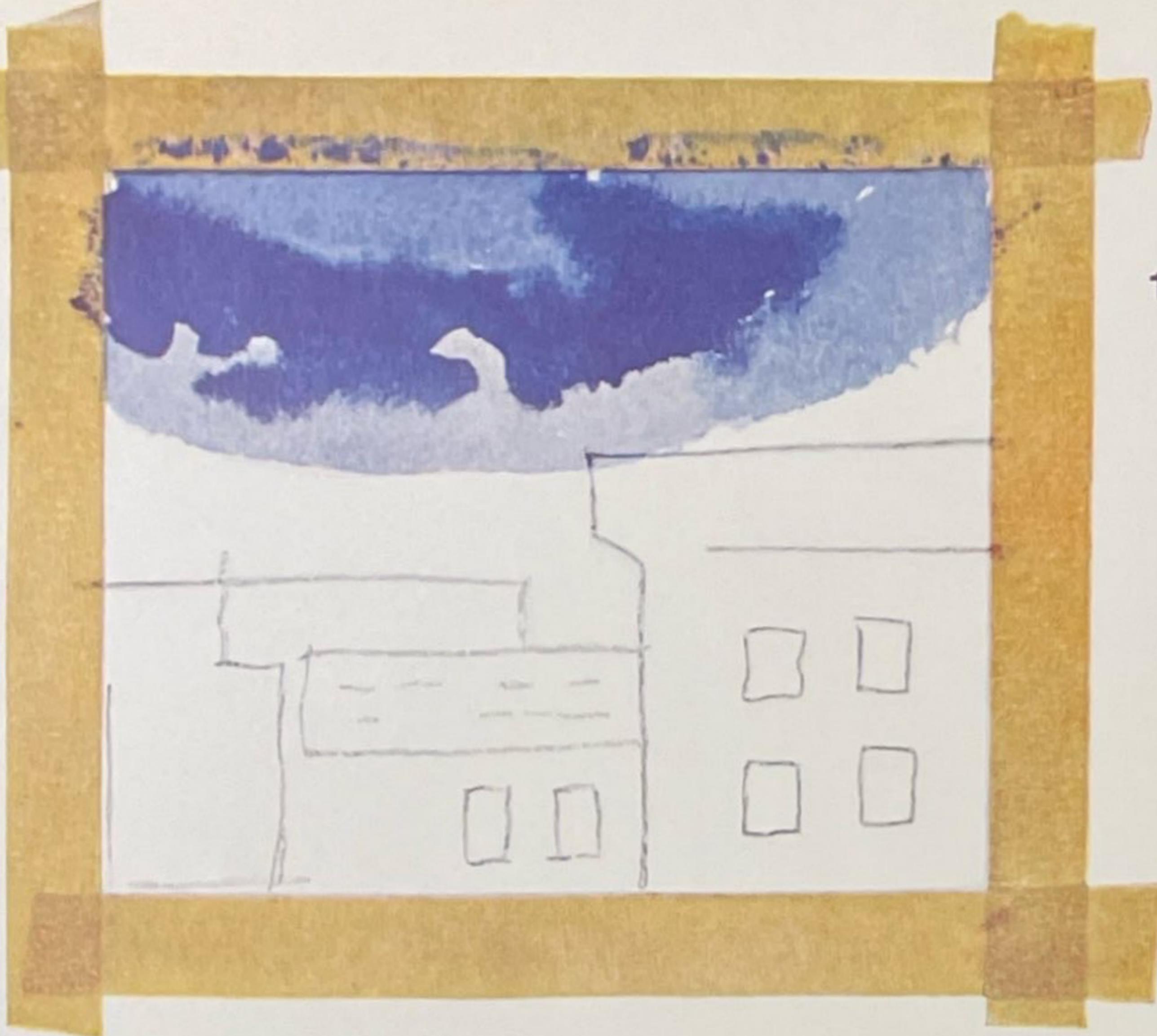
First, draw in the main lines very lightly. You can make all the changes you want at this stage, so work it over until you're satisfied with your placement of the houses and with their relative sizes. Be sure to leave room for that big sweep of blue sky.

Fill in your sky first—it's usually easier to handle watercolor if you begin with your large areas. Paint it in light blue with broad, swinging strokes, working down from the top of the page. Then, while the paint is still wet, drop in your darker shade. Often you'll get interesting, unexpected effects when you let your watercolors run together—learn to accept them happily and leave them alone.

Your next step will be to paint your house facades and roofs. Keep your colors bright and clean—be sure one house is dry before you begin to paint the next. You don't want them to run together.

Your small details come last—in this case, the tree, shingles, windows, shades and the antenna. Let your orange house dry completely before you draw the black tree line in front of it.

Don't be slavishly tied to our painting when you do yours. If you'd like to try other color combinations, do so by all means. If you have other ideas, try them. Our model is here for you to use as you wish—as a guide to follow or as a stimulant to your own imagination.



1 To keep your paint from running into the borders, edge your picture with masking tape. This is a brown paper tape used for temporary fastening that you can buy at any art supply store. You can pull it off easily when you're finished. Then sketch in faintly the outline of the houses. Wet the sky area with clean water and quickly paint it over with a light blue wash. The wet surface of the paper will thin your color, so mix it darker than you want it to appear. Work in broad, sweeping strokes, starting at the top of your picture. While your wash is still wet, pick up a little pure moist blue pigment and drop it into the sky area. It will "creep" out and create a cloud effect.

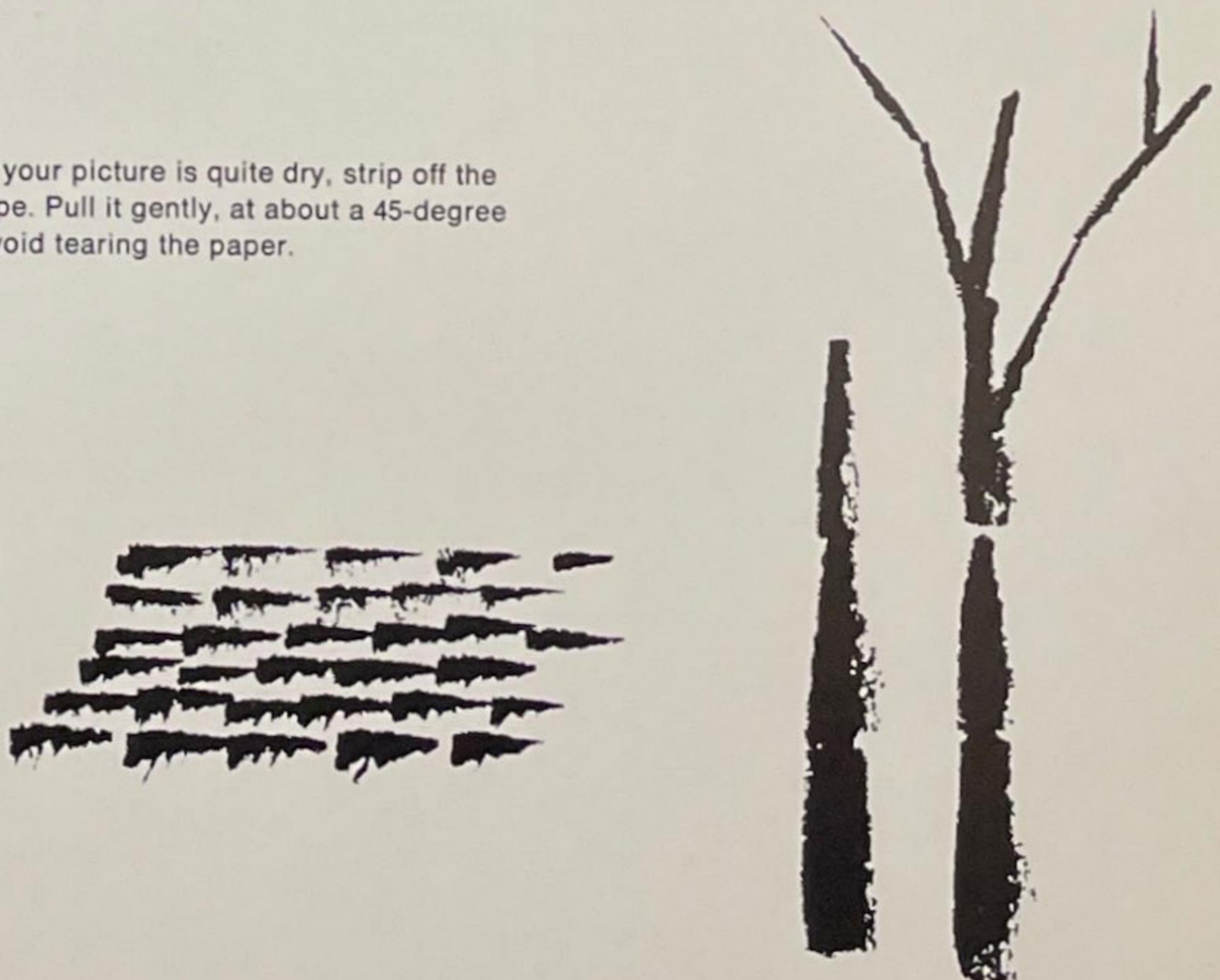
2 After your sky is dry, mix puddles of each of the colors in your palette. To get the red, yellow and blue tones you want, simply mix the pigments with water as they come from the tube. Mix red and blue to get purple; yellow and blue to get green, yellow and red to get orange. Brown is a combination of red, yellow and blue. Now start with red, your largest area. Work in broad strokes with a flat brush. While the pigment is still wet, paint in your brown roof, letting the two colors go into each other a little. If they get too runny, you can control them with a blotter. When these are dry, paint the other houses, letting one dry thoroughly before you begin the next.



3 Paint the TV antenna with a flat brush. Hold it perpendicular to the paper; just touch the edge of the brush to the paper gently to produce a straight line. Use a round brush for the tree trunk and paint upward, the way a tree grows. A flat brush is best for the branches, for the staccato strokes that make the leaves and shingles, and for windows and other details.



Now, when your picture is quite dry, strip off the masking tape. Pull it gently, at about a 45-degree angle, to avoid tearing the paper.



Paint this bouquet

1 Do this flower arrangement first in black and white. With your pencil, draw a simple silhouette, suggesting a vase and the placement of your leaves and flowers. Stick pieces of masking tape over the center of your bouquet, in the shape of the white flower. Then, using a flat watercolor brush, paint the whole silhouette with a very light gray. While it is still moist, add darker wet-in-wet accents to give some depth to the leaves and a feeling of solid form to the vase.

2 While you're waiting for your paint to dry, practice these petal strokes on a piece of scrap paper. Use your flat brush. Hold it vertical. Press lightly and move it down with a curving stroke. Use shorter strokes for the heart-shaped petals. When your brush handling feels right, paint your flowers into your picture.

3 While your flowers are still wet, press them gently near the center with the corner of a blotter or a paper towel wrapped around a piece of cardboard. This will pick up some of the paint, leaving lighter tones in the center that will make the flowers look more real.

4 Add the black stamens and darker leaves and stems, being sure your brush isn't too wet. For veins in the leaves, use the edge of your blotter again. A corner of a large kitchen sponge dipped in your watercolor is a good tool to use for the fernlike foliage. To make the little fan-shaped blossoms, hold a flat brush vertical and make rapid up-and-down stabs — just touching the paper. At last, lift the masking tape and add a few details to indicate petals for the white rose. Now try this vase of flowers over again, this time using all the colors you want.



Try these decorative birds

Outline your picture with masking tape. Cut the shape of the white bird out of ordinary paper and tack it on your picture with rubber cement. This is available at any stationery counter or art supply store and is wonderful for mounting paper temporarily. Wet the left side of your picture with clear water. Dip a sponge in a light gray wash and pat it over the entire picture area, including the cut-out bird

shape. Let it dry. Now you've produced some wet-in-wet effects on the left and some drier, coarse textures on the right. With a darker gray tone and the sponge, pat in the disk behind the white bird. Paint the second bird in flat black. When everything is completely dry, lift the masking tape and the white bird silhouette. The rubber cement will come right off. Just rub it gently with your finger.

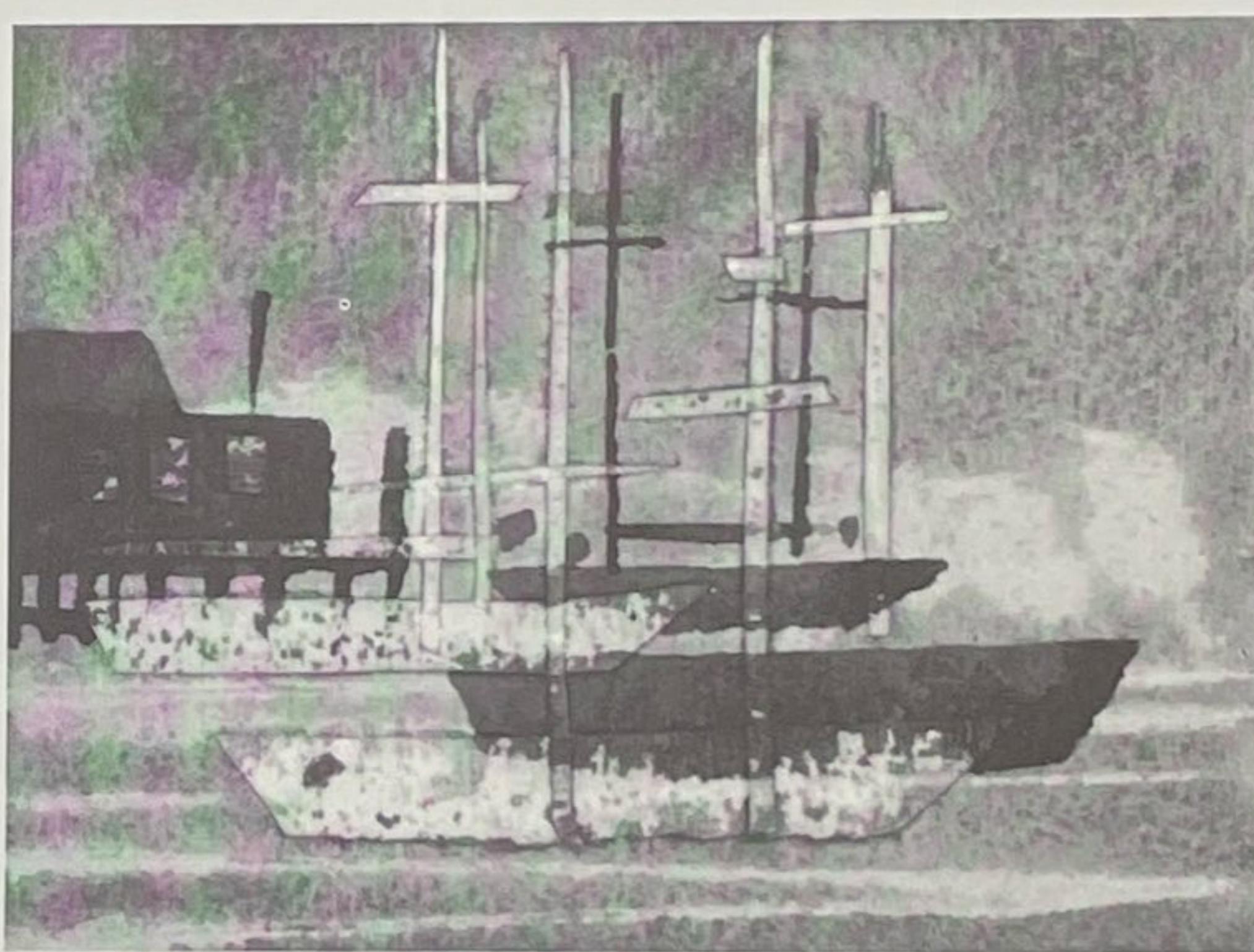
More adventures with watercolor

Now that you know something about the basic techniques of painting with watercolor, let's take a break and try out some different tools. You'll find, as you did with your ink experiments, that unusual tools can give you effects that might occasionally add just the right touch to your work. It's fun in a painting, for instance, to combine your brushstrokes with textures you can create with such offbeat tools as a piece of twig, a string or a sponge. White clouds can be picked out of a wet watercolor sky by dabbing it with a bunched-up piece of tissue. Masking tape is a very helpful tool because you can use it to cover and protect the parts of your picture you want to keep white. A simple white silhouette such as you might create for a poster or design could be painted in, but it would be easier to use the masking method.

Thin white shapes in a watercolor picture — a boat mast, a telephone pole, a tree branch — can be blocked out with cut-out strips of masking tape. Paint right over the tape — it doesn't matter. When you lift it, your paper underneath will still be clean and white. You could, of course, scratch out the white shapes with a sharp razor blade, or erase, or paint them in with opaque white. Masking tape is just one of several possible tools. Try it, too, when you want to indicate tiny flying birds — seagulls, perhaps — against a blue sky.

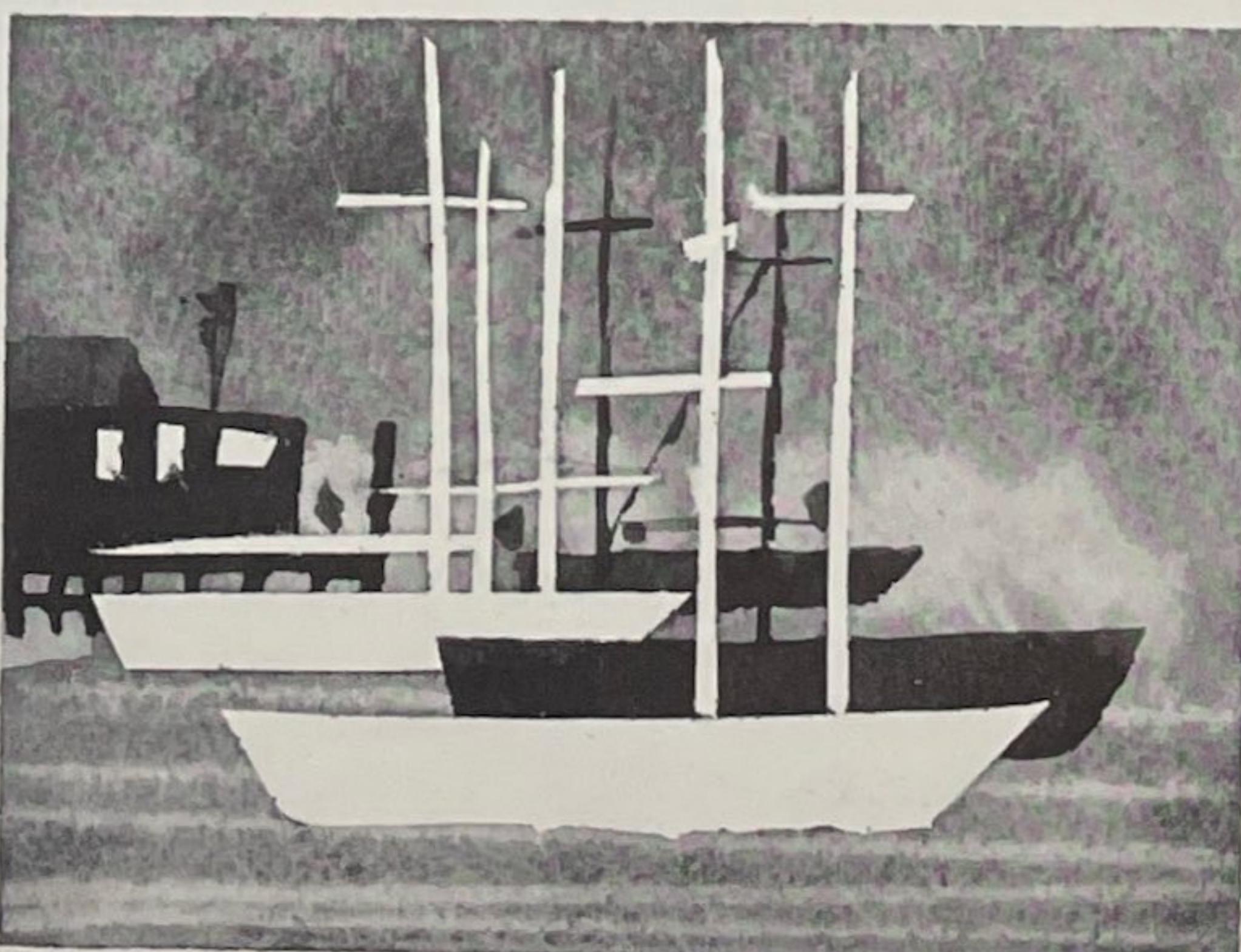
It's best to use inexpensive paper for watercolor experiments. Almost anything you happen to have around is all right — even corrugated cardboard. Expensive watercolor paper can make you timid and stifle your sense of adventure. You may feel that you just have to produce something wonderful at once.

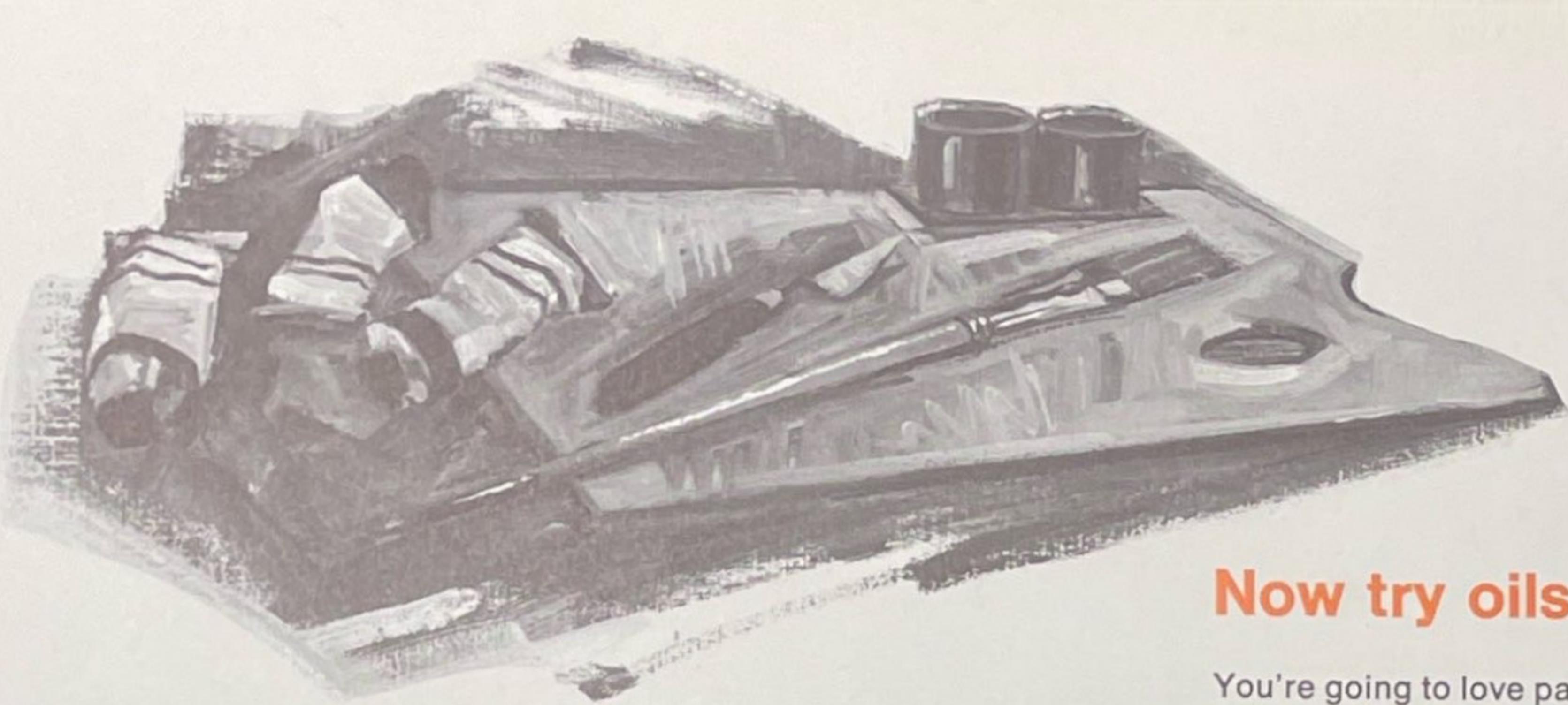
Try the watercolors on these pages, following the procedures we've outlined for you. Then create some of your own. Search for your own tools, your own effects.



A helpful masking trick

Draw your picture lightly with pencil. Cover the white shapes with cut-out strips of masking tape. Paint the whole area with gray, adding some darker wet-in-wet tones for your sky. Now, with the edge of your blotter, stroke across the water to make ripples. Let the picture dry. Paint in your dark boats and the boat house. Peel off the masking tape after your painting is dry.



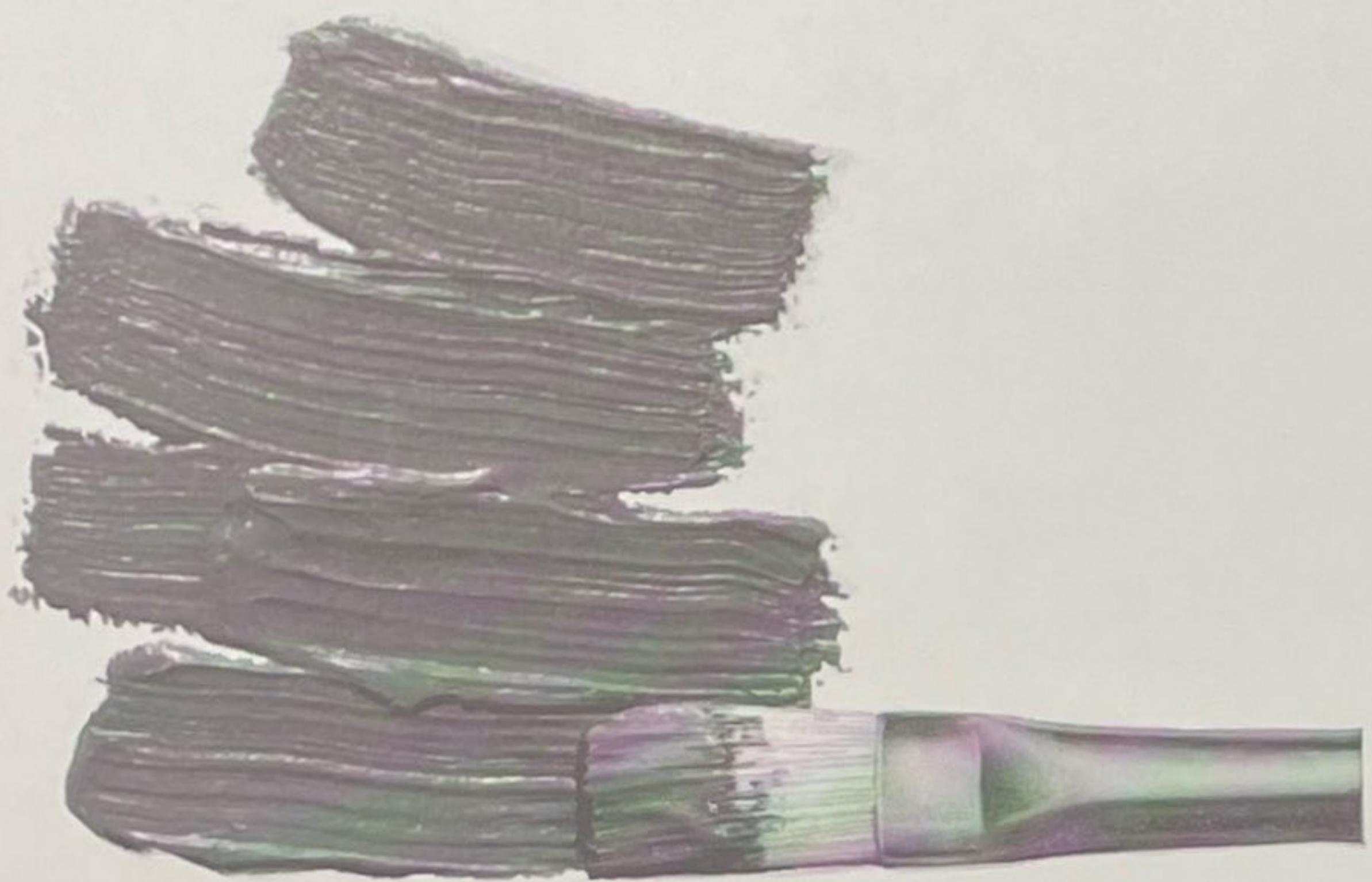


Now try oils

You're going to love painting with oils. They're so easy to control and come in such beautiful colors, you may even decide that you like them best of all the mediums. You'll be in good company if you do — some of the world's greatest artists have found that oils suited them best. They're the favorite of lots of amateurs, too — among them Winston Churchill, the great British statesman and World War II leader. "Painting," he said, "came to my rescue in a most trying time." That was when he was forty years old and it gave him such pleasure he continued to paint almost to the end of his long life.

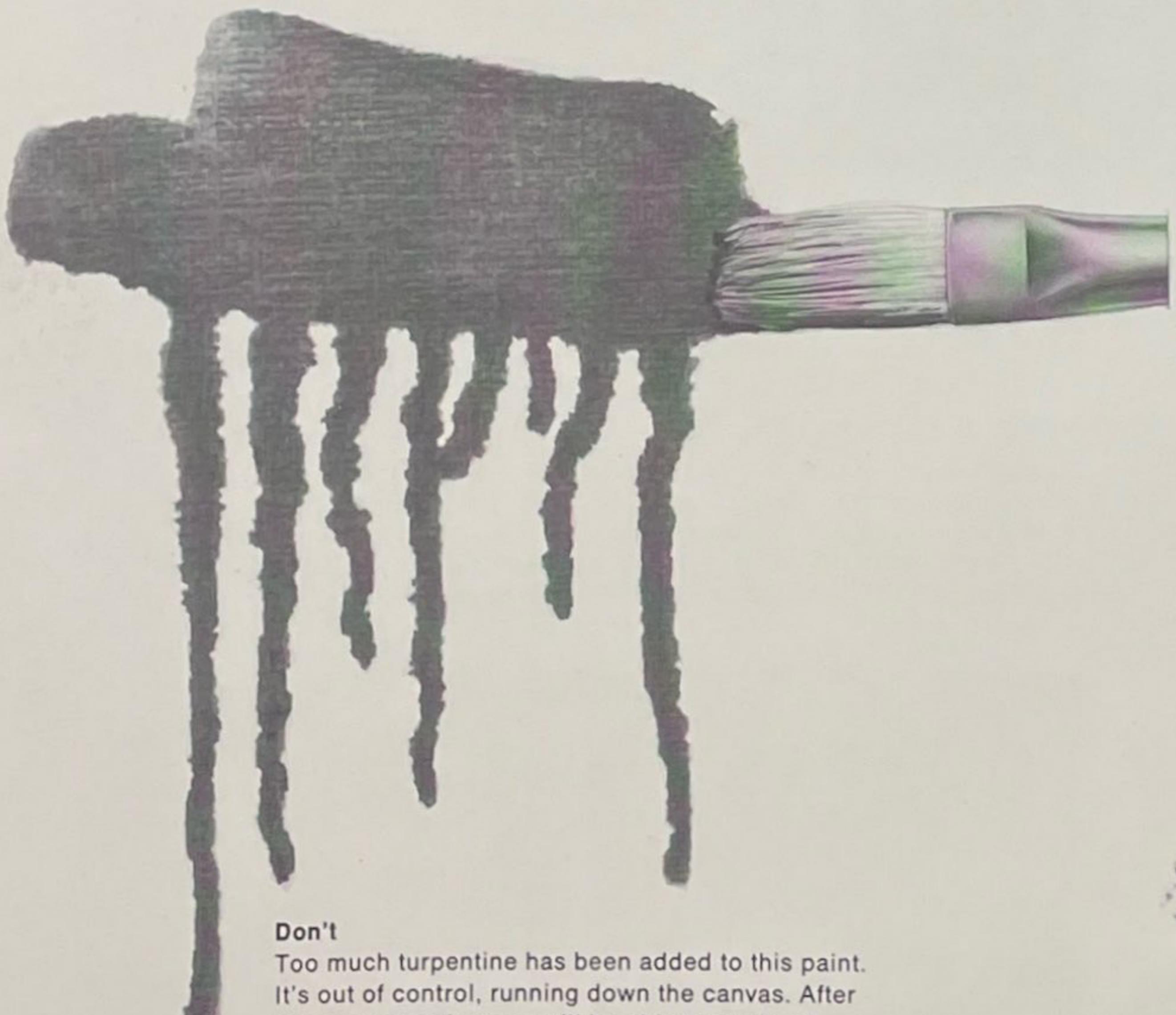
Churchill tells about the first time he sat down, timorously, before a blank white canvas: "Having bought the colours, an easel, and a canvas, the next step was to *begin*. But what a step to take! . . . My hand seemed arrested by a silent veto. But after all the sky on this occasion was unquestionably blue, and a pale blue at that. There could be no doubt that blue paint mixed with white should be put on the top part of the canvas. One really does not need to have an artist's training to see that. It is a starting-point open to all. So very gingerly I mixed a little blue paint on the palette with a very small brush, and then with infinite precaution made a mark about as big as a bean upon the affronted snow-white shield. . . . At that moment the loud approaching sound of a motor-car was heard in the drive. From this chariot there stepped swiftly and lightly none other than the gifted wife of Sir John Lavery. 'Painting! But what are you hesitating about? Let me have a brush — the big one.' Splash into the turpentine, wallop into the blue and the white, frantic flourish on the palette — clean no longer — and then several large, fierce strokes and slashes of blue on the absolutely cowering canvas. Any-one could see that it could not hit back. . . . The spell was broken . . . I seized the largest brush and fell upon my victim with Berserk fury. I have never felt any awe of a canvas since."

We hope you won't feel any awe of the canvas. There are so many things about this medium that make it exciting to



Do

While you're getting acquainted with oils, keep them fairly thick — about the consistency of soft butter. Sometimes they're just right as they come from the tube; if they seem too thick, thin them with a little turpentine.



Don't

Too much turpentine has been added to this paint. It's out of control, running down the canvas. After you gain experience you'll be able to apply oil thinly if you wish, but as a beginner you'll find that thicker paint is easier to handle.



Using the side of your brush, brush in gently three or four light and dark tones while they are all still wet. Don't scrub too hard or they'll blend together and you'll end up with a gray monotone.

A painter in a studio, wearing a dark cap and a light-colored apron, is focused on painting a landscape on a canvas. The painter is holding a palette knife and applying paint to the canvas. In the background, there are shelves with various art supplies and a window showing a snowy outdoor scene with houses.

work with. The heady smells of turpentine and paint, the thick juiciness of the oils when you squeeze them out on your palette will be enough to make your fingers itch to get started. You'll find your own way of working, whether with bristle brush or sable, with palette knife or finger. You'll learn how the oil can be broadly, loosely, quickly or gently brushed, or blurred into shadow with a touch of your thumb. You'll learn to apply strokes like those pictured on these pages to get interesting texture in your painting.

You'll love those glowing rich colors—and the freedom oils give you. Only with this medium can you alter your painting as much and as often as you want to. You can leave an oil painting and go back to it the next day or the next week. You can paint on layer after layer—you can even scrape all the paint off and start over if you don't like the way it looks.

As we suggested with watercolor, we hope you'll take your oil paints outside. With oils you can probably come closest to matching the colors you'll find in brilliant sunlight. With your oil paints in front of you you'll be looking at the variety of forms, textures and colors in nature in a new way—the painter's way.

You'll need some equipment: something to sit on, plenty of turpentine and rags and, of course, canvas or canvas board, a palette, brushes and your paints. If you don't have an easel or don't want to bother with one, you can use the back of your paintbox or a rock to support your canvas. The important thing is to keep it steady.

What colors should you use? Actually, for your work in this section, you'll need only red, yellow and blue. You can mix any color you want from these three. We'll suggest a more complete list of basic colors for you to use in a later section on oil painting, but if you want to try some other tubes of color now, there's no reason why you shouldn't go ahead and get them.

Now, get your brush and let's get started.



With a bristle brush, apply your paint in thick short strokes, placed at random angles to each other. Try for interesting textures—don't put your paint on smoothly, monotonously, as if you were painting a wall.



Paint this autumn day

When you work with oils, painting and drawing are one and the same. You draw with your paintbrush, revising lines, sharpening edges, changing colors as you go. The knowledge that a brushstroke is never necessarily final gives you a fine sense of freedom.

You'll find your own methods of working with oils, but when you paint the picture on this page, we hope you'll follow our steps pretty closely. We've worked them out carefully to demonstrate to you some of the characteristics of this medium — and to help you avoid running into difficulties. You'll see, for example, that you do better to mix each color on your palette before putting it on the canvas. If you try to blend or scrub your pigments around too much on your painting they're apt to become muddy.

It makes sense, too, to start with fairly thin paint and work toward the thickness you want, as we have done in this exercise. Too much thick paint can be hard to control. We used dabs of very thick pigment, called impasto, for our final touches in the foreground. You'll see the reason when you paint your picture — impasto helps give the illusion of depth

when it's used just for things that are close up.

As you have already done with other mediums, plan your picture lightly in pencil first. But this time, because you'll give them shape and form with your brushstrokes, you need only indicate the placement of hills, trees and grass. You're not tinting a drawing, you're drawing as you paint.

Keep your distant hills low, beneath a deep expanse of sky. Your trees should be big and bold — they're the main subjects of your picture.

Paint your sky first, then your hills and the far reaches of the meadow. As you work toward the foreground, thicken your paints and let your colors grow brighter. Though our colors aren't realistic, we've followed nature by subduing those in the distance. You've noticed that outdoors, even on the clearest day, faraway colors look paler because you see them through a veil of atmosphere.

Add your touches of impasto last. You'll see that you can use the thickness of the paint to create an interesting variety of textures and to bring closer the bright leaves, the bush and the pink grass.



Try these wide, swinging strokes for your sky.



1 First, indicate with light pencil lines the general shape, size and placement of the elements in your picture. On your palette mix blue and white with enough turpentine to make the pigment quite thin. Paint the sky, adding more white to the mixture as you get closer to the horizon. Then add a touch of yellow just above the line where earth touches sky.



Mix blue, black and white together to paint your hills.



2 Now mix blue with white and a bit of black for the hills. See how you can use the brush to suggest the contours of the hills. Add a little yellow to this blue mixture and you will get the dark blue-green color for the far edges of the meadow. Use a little thicker paint for the meadow than for the sky and hills.



Practice short, choppy strokes for your yellow leaves.



3 Mix blue and yellow for the brighter green in the field. Paint more thickly as you work toward the foreground. With impasto, fill in the yellows, browns and greens of the foliage. Notice the touches of red in the yellow leaves. Mix white with red for grass and paint it with short upward strokes.



Try scrubbing on dabs of paint for the red foliage.



4 Mix brown for your tree trunk. Draw the branches loosely with the sharp edge of a No. 6 brush. Paint upward, the way a tree grows. Add dabs of white to tree trunks on right. Paint the bush with short dabs of thick green paint. When you are through, clean your brushes with turpentine, then wash them with soap and warm water, as you did your ink and watercolor brushes.



Paint your grass in quick upward strokes.



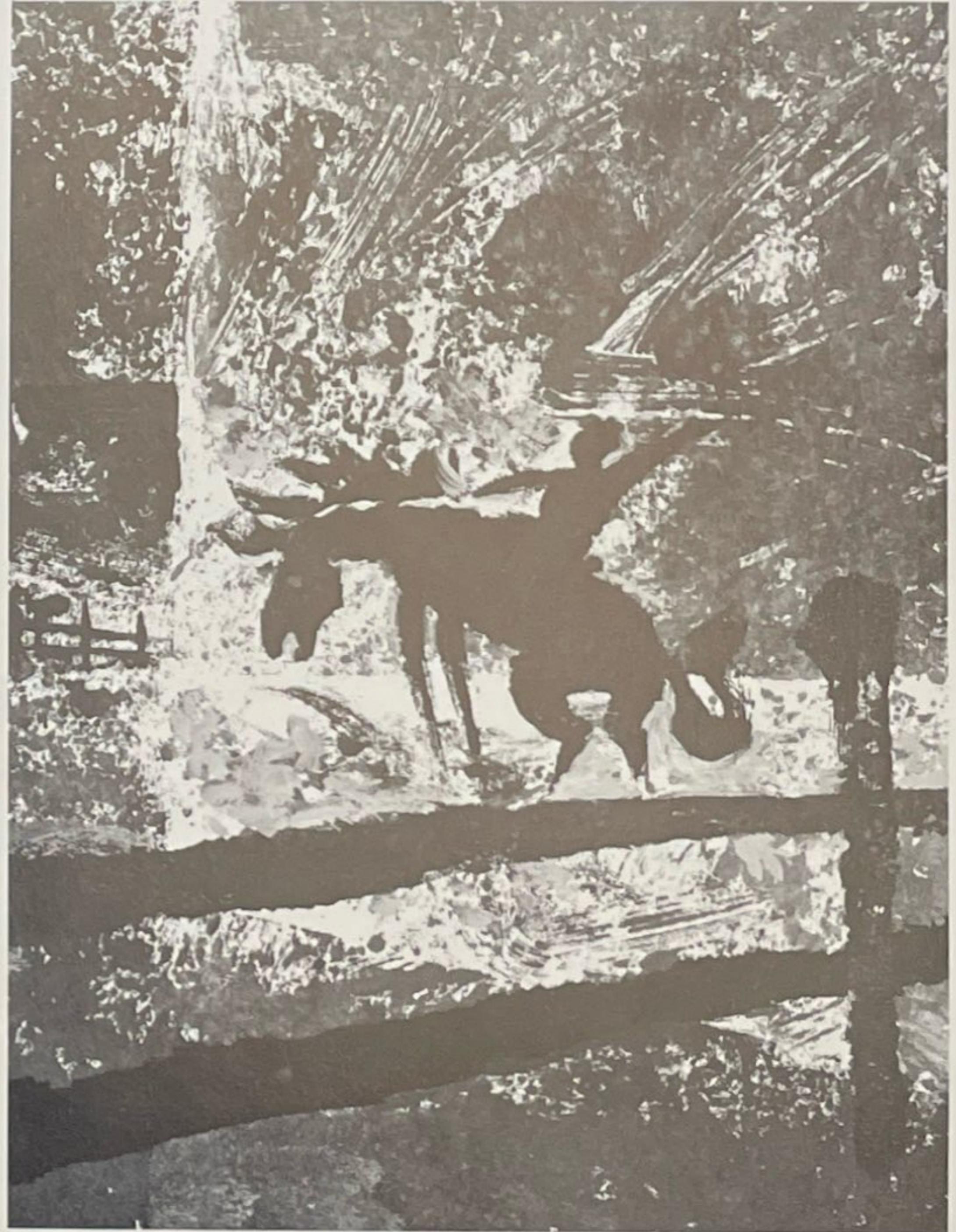
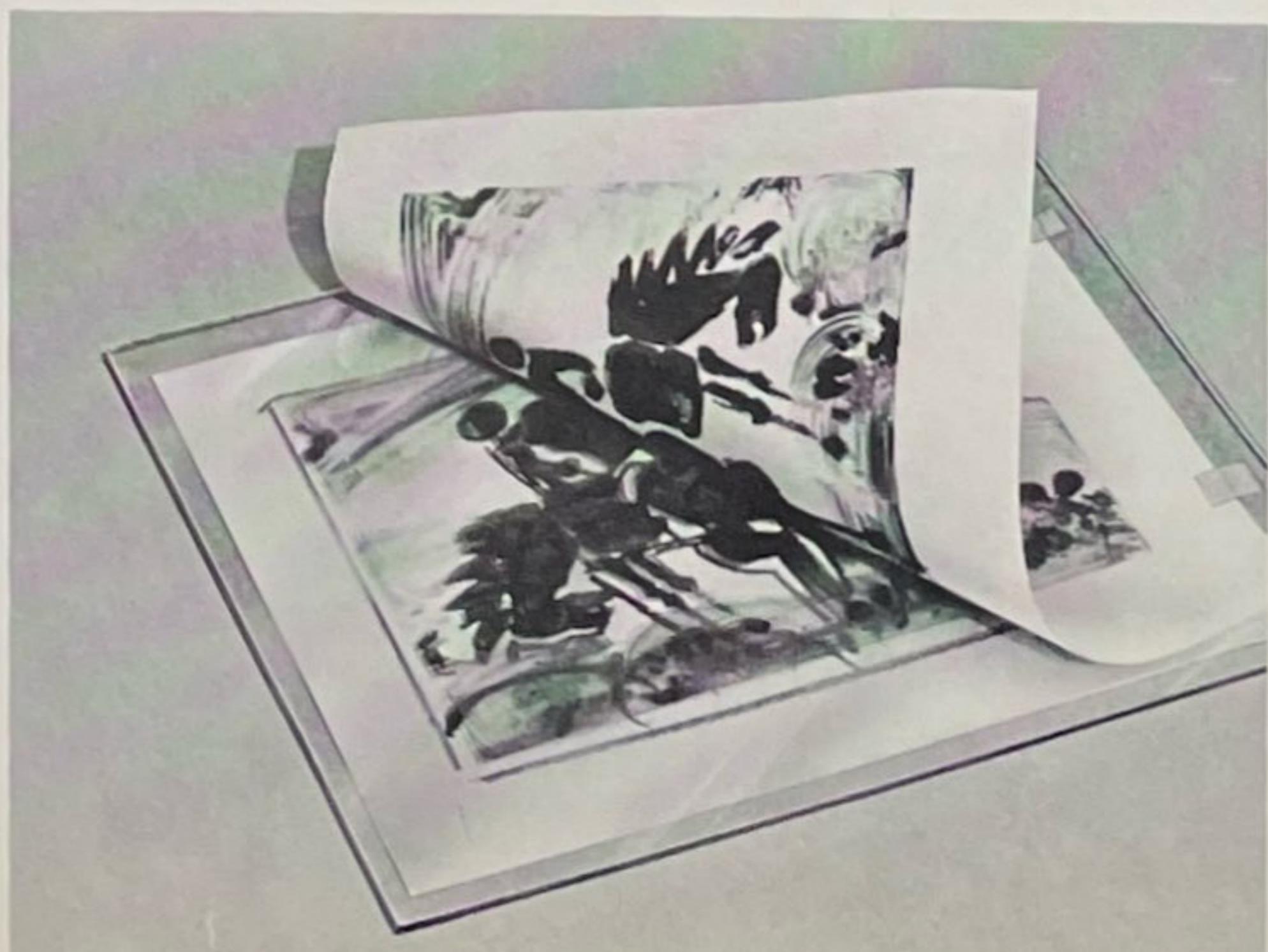


More things to do with oils

Just because oils are thick and heavy doesn't mean they have to be solemn as well. You can have just as much fun with them making imaginative, "designy" things as you can with watercolors. On these pages we've used some tools and techniques with oils that may be new to you. We've masked in one place, stenciled in another, used sponge and rags in place of brushes. We've even shown you a way of doing your own printing. The picture of the girl and cat, above, was made this way. It's called the *monoprint process* because each print is an original, a little different from the others. You can use it, though, to run off several copies of the same picture. Try it for making your own Christmas cards or posters for your next school dance.

How to make a monoprint

The process is very simple. First, sketch the outline of your picture in pencil and then place it under a piece of window glass. Now, using the sketch to guide you, paint the picture on the glass, just as you would on canvas. You can scratch interesting textures into your paint with a brush handle, your fingernail, a comb or a fork. When the picture is finished, and still wet, lay a piece of paper over it gently. Tack down the paper (try all kinds) with masking tape and rub carefully over the whole picture area with the heel of your hand or a spoon. You've made your first print. Lift the paper slowly, touch up the picture on the glass with fresh paint, and you're ready to make another.



A picture for a monoprint shouldn't be too detailed. Try this one. Lay in your background first with a sponge, dabbing gently, then add your whites with a brush. Paint the horse-and-rider silhouette and fence last. One word of caution: Don't pile your paint on too thickly. If you do, it will spread when you press your paper over it. You may need to experiment to find just the right consistency.



See how much of this picture you can paint without a brush

This is jazz, caught on canvas. You can almost hear that trombone blasting its wild, throbbing notes right off the edge of the page. Paint it if you like; it would look fine hanging on your wall. We did ours in black and white, but use whatever colors you feel.

Just for fun, see how much of this picture you can paint without your brush. Use a rag or a sponge dipped in paint to rub in a thin background. When you darken the right side, mask the rest of the picture area with a piece of newspaper.

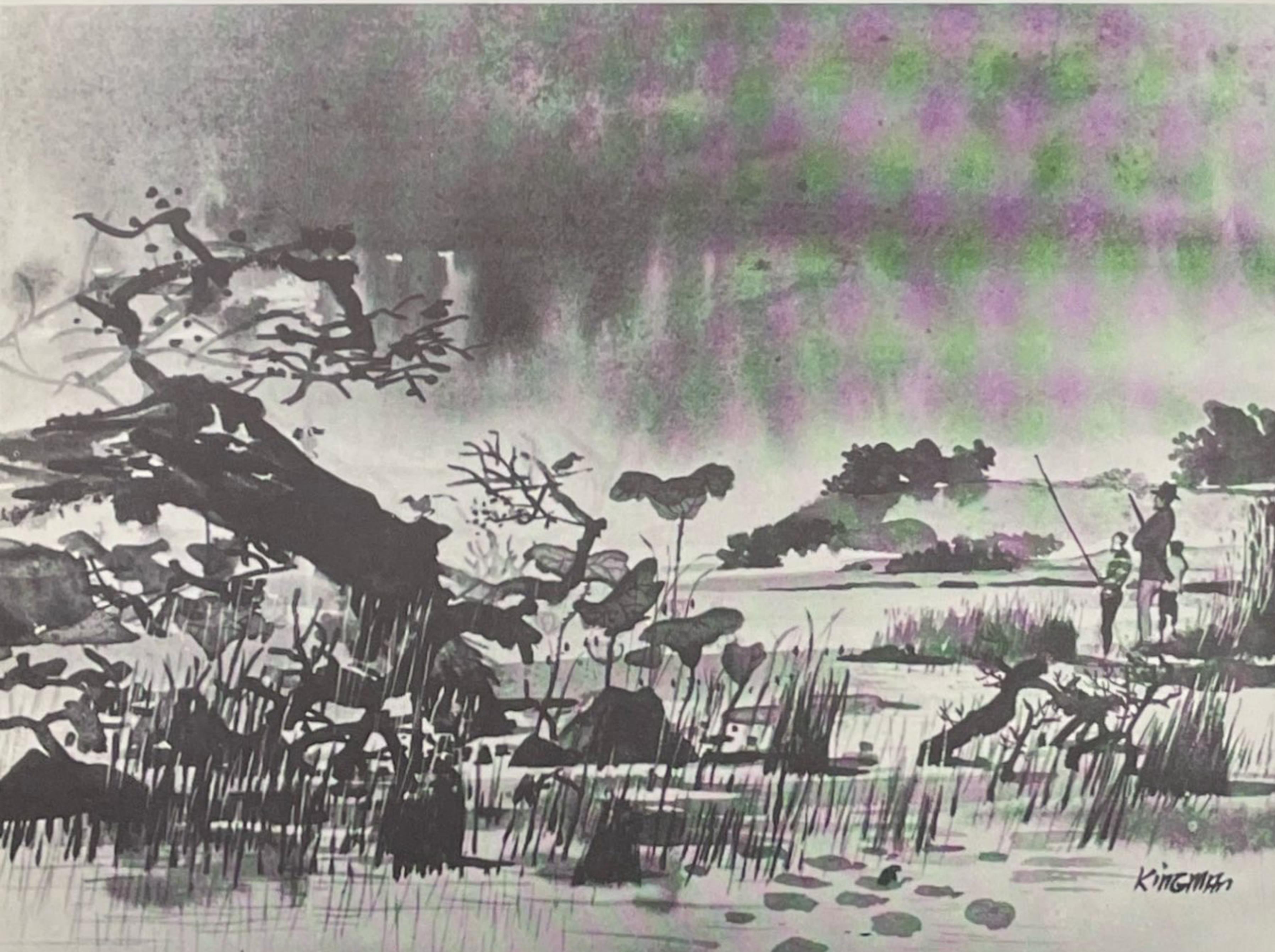
Use cutouts wherever you can. Those airy, lacy notes behind the trombone are the imprint of an ordinary paper doily. Just lay it on the area and rub over it with a rag smeared with dark color. Cut out a stencil for the round notes. About six holes are enough; you can repeat them. The trombone is stenciled on, too. Create the long, piercing sounds with the edge of a long piece of cardboard. You can pivot and slide it to make the broad lines. For variety in texture, make some lines with thick paint, others with thin.

Gallery

Paintings in oil and watercolor

Oils and watercolors fill the walls of the world's museums; the greatest artists have painted in these mediums. Here are a few for you to look up at your library: Jean Ingres, J. M. W. Turner, Francisco Goya, El Greco, Pierre Bonnard, Jackson Pollock, Stuart Davis, John Marin, Andrew Wyeth, Paul Klee. Note how widely their styles differ.

Faculty member Dong Kingman has so skillfully caught in watercolor the moments before a storm, you can almost see the lowering clouds darken and feel the freshening wind. Kingman, a Chinese-American artist, has been a watercolorist for over thirty years.



Courtesy of *The Saturday Evening Post*

Watercolor suited Winslow Homer, who loved to work in the out-of-doors. Here, in *Palm Tree, Nassau*, he seized, with paint and brush, the sparkling newness of a rain-washed, windswept beach after a tropical storm. Homer, a New Englander, discovered the Caribbean in his last years. He painted *Palm Tree* twelve years before he died, in 1910, at the age of seventy-four.



The Brooklyn Museum, New York

Portraits are probably the most difficult of all subjects to handle in watercolor. Yet John Singer Sargent, a master watercolorist, used the medium to portray with stunning accuracy the brooding sadness in this noble face. Sargent, an American who spent most of his life in Europe, became the most fashionable portraitist in Edwardian England. "I don't dig beneath the surface," he said. "I paint what I see." The subject of *The Tramp*, however, must have interested him, for this is one of his most deeply searching portraits.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Lazarus Fund, 1910





Oskar Kokoschka used thick dabs of oil paint to charge with movement this everyday scene from his studio window. The sky churns, each building is a sparkling, dancing jewel of brilliant color. The painting is called *Dresden, New Town II*. Kokoschka, born in Austria in 1886, was a master colorist. To him, color was "an eminently sensuous element that can make the eyes intoxicated as though with exquisite wine."

In *Lobster Shack, Monhegan Island*, Ernest Fiene has created in oil a sense of enduring quiet, of peace. He varied the thickness of the paint to emphasize the contrasts in textures in his building, rocks and sky. Fiene, who has often painted the Maine landscape, was a contemporary American artist who came to this country from Germany when he was eighteen years old.



Midtown Galleries, New York

Scene with Farm House
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Harry G. Seggerman



Maurice Vlaminck, who in his early days was known for his violent, headstrong use of color, was more restrained in this poetic glimpse in oil of a French country house framed with summer greenery. A great artist who taught himself to paint, Vlaminck produced oils and watercolors, ceramics and prints, illustrated a number of books, wrote poetry and novels and was an accomplished violinist. He spent much of his life in the country, working the land.



Take your paints outside to sketch

Nature doesn't always set up pictures for us to paint. The photograph at the left, typical of a scene we might come upon outdoors, seems at first all jumbled and confused. How, you may ask, could you paint it? There's so much... But you don't have to paint every root and weed and rock. You'll learn to select just the bits and pieces that attract your artistic eye. Look through the clutter, into the heart of nature. When you do, the clutter will vanish. Only the wonderful shapes and colors and lights will remain.

When you find them, make sketch notes like those below in oil or watercolor to help you remember what you've seen so you can paint it later if you want to, at home.



From the same vantage point the photographer chose to take the picture at upper left, an artist sketched in oil that house peeking over the fence at the top of the hill. His written notes will help jog his memory later on about the colors he saw and the way the afternoon light slanted across the steep cliffside.



Standing at the same spot, the artist saw in the fallen tree a shape that delighted him. He painted it in watercolor. He'll keep both of these sketches and probably refer to them someday when he's working on a painting.